



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release

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TAMPA MAN FOUND GUILTY IN REFUND SCAM

Tampa, Florida - A jury in U.S. District Court in Tampa, Florida, yesterday found Carlos I. Cosme, of Tampa, Florida, guilty of conspiracy to defraud the United States by making false claims and of making and presenting a false claim. The maximum penalty Cosme faces is fifteen years' imprisonment and a \$500,000 fine. The sentencing hearing has yet to be scheduled.

Cosme was indicted on April 10, 2003.

According to evidence presented at trial, during 1999 and 2000, Cosme and his niece, Vivian Martinez, operated a small tax return preparation business and conspired to prepare and electronically file a series of false and fraudulent claims for income tax refunds. Martinez pled guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States on October 17th and testified as a government witness at trial.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the Internal Revenue Service. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robert A. Mosakowski.